



**Natural Resources
Conservation Service**

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News Release

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Ranchers invited to apply for USDA habitat and rangeland improvement program

Application deadline: April 29

STILLWATER, Okla., April 15, 2016—USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) in Oklahoma has opened a second round of signups for participation in the [Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative](#) (LPCI). By providing technical and financial assistance for conservation practices, LPCI allows landowners to improve habitat for the lesser prairie-chicken and increase the productivity of grazing land.

LPCI is available in Alfalfa, Beaver, Beckham, Cimarron, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Harper, Major, Texas, Roger Mills, Woodward and Woods Counties. Those interested in participating should apply at their [local USDA Service Center](#) by April 29, 2016.

“Conserving and enhancing habitat benefits ranchers and the lesser prairie-chicken alike,” said Steve Glasgow, NRCS Oklahoma State Resource Conservationist. “Conservation work provides better forage and grazing lands for livestock and can improve a producer’s operation and management.”

LPCI helps ranchers remove invasive plants and adopt grazing management systems that provide habitat for the lesser prairie-chicken while sustaining adequate forage for livestock. Grazing management plans also help ranchers select grasses that survive best during drought.

An iconic bird of the prairie, the lesser prairie chicken is found in grasslands and prairies of the Southern Great Plains. Loss and fragmentation of habitat has caused population declines and led the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the species as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 2014. The current range for the prairie chicken is reduced to relatively small and scattered areas totaling about 17 percent of its historic range.

Through LPCI, NRCS works with landowners in five Great Plains states to improve habitat for the prairie chicken and improve sustainability and productivity of grazing lands. NRCS has focused its work on more than 10 million acres of core habitat in Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. About 95 percent of prairie chicken habitat that supports populations occurs on privately owned lands.

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